released by the Central Government for those roads; and

(c) the response of the Central Government to the above proposal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI M. RAJASEKARA MURTHY): (a) to (c) The State Govt. of Maharashtra has been representing from time to time for declaration of certain roads as new National Highways. During the 8th Plan, the State Government has forwarded 11 proposals of State roads to be declared as National Highways. As the funds allocated during the 8th Plan for National Highways are not even adequate to meet the developmental needs of the existing routes, it is difficult to declare the above State roads as New National Highways at present stage.

Extension of postal network in backward States

380. SHRI BHAGABANMAJHI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons that the postal network has not been expanded adequately in the backward States like Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar;

(b) whether it is far from satisfactory in the tribal regions in these States;

(c) if so, the steps taken to pay adequate attention in the expansion of postal network in these States; and

(d) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATION (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) Postal network has duly expanded in Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar. The average area and population served per Post Office in these States, compared with all-India average are as follows:—

	All India	Orissa	Bihar	Madhya Pradesh
Area served per P.O. (sq. km.)	21.48	19.28	14.70	26.55
Population served per P.O.	5526	3922	7423	5897

(b) No, Sir. Tribal areas in these States have been receiving due attention in development.

(c) and (d) Does not arise in view of (a) & (b) above.

Demand for Cellular Phones

381. SHRI RAHASBIHARI BARIK: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether steps have been taken by Government to introduce cellular phone service in additional areas in the country;

(b) whether he is aware of the increasing response and demand for providing cellular phone service;

(c) if so, the year by which the cellular phone service would be provided in the entire country; and

(d) the steps taken to improve the existing phone services in the entire country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATION (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) and (b) Yes Sir.

(c) The service has already started in Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta & Madras. The service is likely to start in many cities in the rest of the country by the end of 1996.